

HOUSE BILL 2535

By Pitts

AN ACT to designate a bridge on the 101st Airborne Division Parkway (State Route 374) in Montgomery County as the "Gander Memorial Bridge".

WHEREAS, from time to time, the members of this General Assembly have seen fit to name certain highways and bridges to honor the memory of those courageous members of the United States Armed Forces who lost their lives while serving of our nation; and

WHEREAS, on December 12, 1985, 248 soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division, United States Army at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, died in an airline crash at Gander, Newfoundland, Canada; and

WHEREAS, the "Gander Crash" was the greatest loss of life the 101st Airborne had experienced in a single day since the Division was designated, including the Battle of Bastogne, D-Day, and the Battle of the Bulge; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly and the good people of the State of Tennessee greatly appreciate the sacrifice these soldiers made to promote peace in the Middle East; and

WHEREAS, these brave soldiers considered military service for the United States of America to be an honor and chose not to hand what they felt was their responsibility over to others; and

WHEREAS, these courageous members of the 101st Airborne Division served with dignity, dedication, courage, and gallantry, and for making the ultimate sacrifice, they deserve proper recognition; and

WHEREAS, their dedication to excellence in the military and their love of their fellow soldiers and their country, exemplified in their sacrifice of life itself in service of all that they held dear, stand as enduring examples of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, to date, Fort Campbell, Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and Gander, Newfoundland have erected memorials to honor the courageous soldiers who died in the Gander Crash, but the City of Clarksville has not yet established a fitting memorial to honor the victims of this great tragedy that devastated the community and to provide solace to the family and friends they left behind; and

WHEREAS, the Clarksville City Council has petitioned this body to name a bridge on the 101st Airborne Division Parkway (State Route 374) to permanently commemorate the singular patriotism, courage, and commitment to duty of the 248 soldiers of that proud Division who lost their lives in the Gander Crash; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly most heartily concurs with this excellent proposal; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the bridge on the 101st Airborne Division Parkway (State Route 374) at such route's intersection with Wilma Rudolph Boulevard (U.S. Highway 79) in the City of Clarksville, Montgomery County is hereby designated as the "Gander Memorial Bridge" in recognition of the 248 valiant members of the 101st Airborne Division, United States Army who died in the airline crash at Gander, Newfoundland on December 12, 1985.

SECTION 2. The Department of Transportation is directed to erect suitable signs or to affix suitable markers designating the bridge described in Section 1 as the "Gander Memorial Bridge". The cost of such signage shall be funded in accordance with Tennessee Code Annotated, § 54-1-133.

SECTION 3. The erection of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the Commissioner of Transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not

render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.